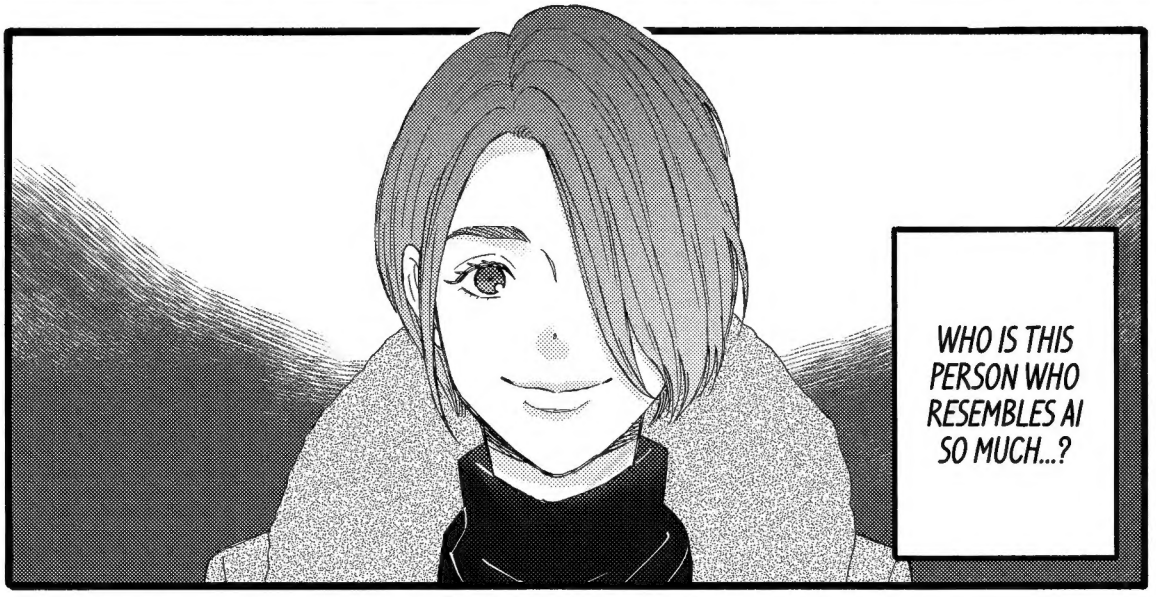
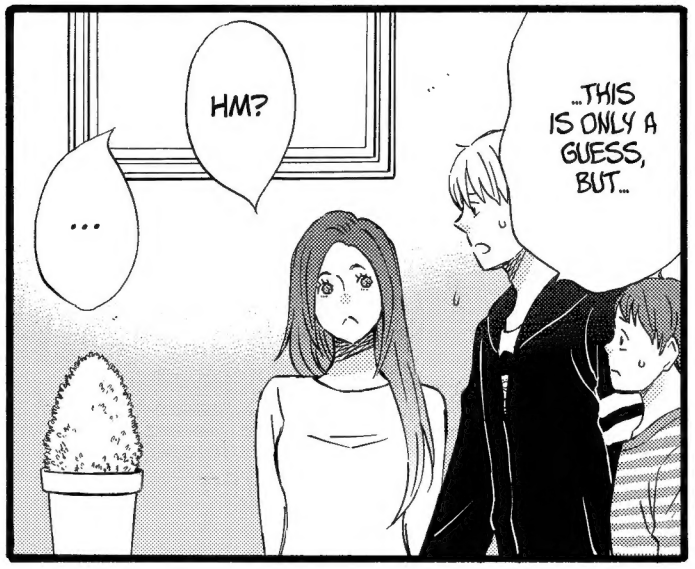
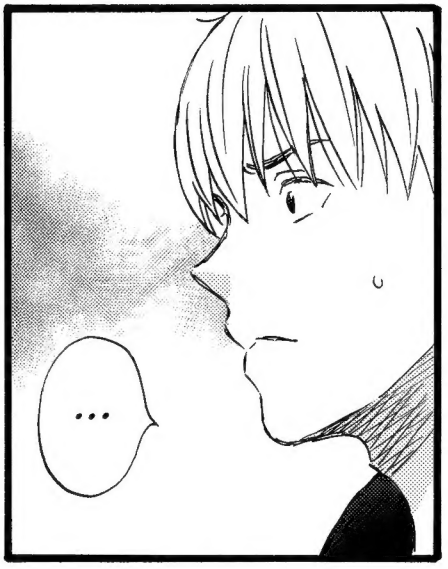
PREVIOUSLY ON LA LA LA... JUN WAS SPENDING HIS FIRST NEW YEAR'S HOLIDAYS WITH THE KIRISHIMA FAMILY.
THEY WERE HAVING A GOOD TIME UNTIL AN UNEXPECTED VISITOR INTERRUPTED THEM...!
Ker-Chak
Ker-Chak
Ker-Chak
IT'S ME, ME! OPEN UP...! AND SORRY, I DIDN'T KNOW YOU CHANGED THE LOCK...!


WHO IS THIS PERSON WHO RESEMBLES AI SO MUCH...?


...
HM?
...THIS IS ONLY A GUESS, BUT...


...

YOU'VE BEEN LIVING IN THIS HOUSE SINCE YOU WERE BORN, RIGHT?

YEAH. WELL, I'VE BEEN TOLD THIS WAS MY FAMILY'S HOME EVEN BEFORE I WAS BORN...

...

AI-SAN, I THINK THAT PERSON OUTSIDE MIGHT BE YOUR BIOLOGICAL MOTHER...

HUH?!

WHAT?!

HM...

OH. BUT STILL, THERE'S THE POSSIBILITY THAT IT COULD BE ONE OF YOUR RELATIVES, RIGHT?

WE ONLY HAVE DISTANT RELATIVES. AND WE DON'T REALLY HAVE ANY CONNECTION WITH THEM ANYMORE.

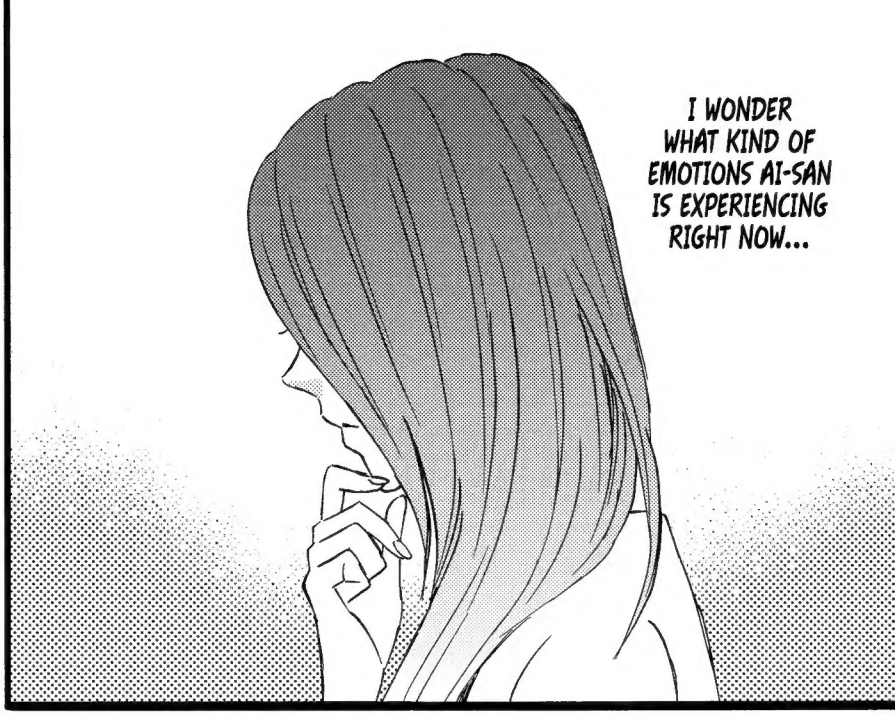
...WHAT IF IT'S TRULY AI-SAN'S MOTHER...?

WHAT IF IT'S TRULY HER BIOLOGICAL MOTHER, THE PERSON WHO GAVE BIRTH TO HER...?

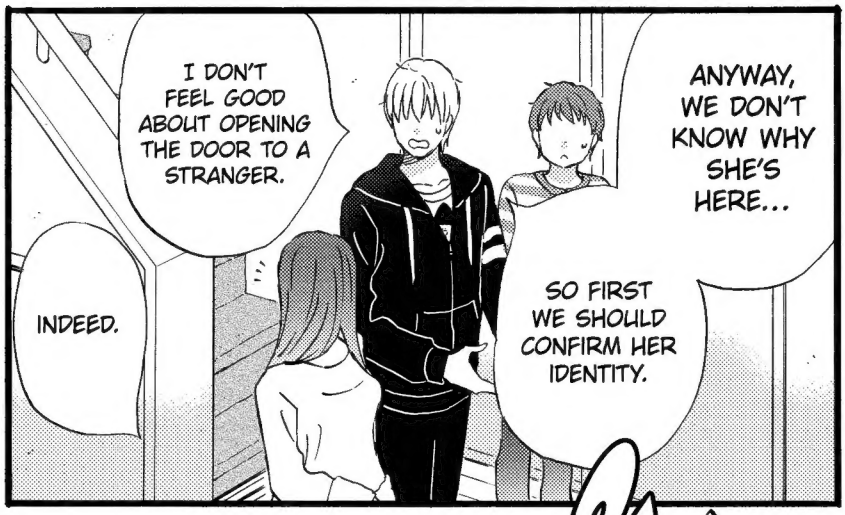
I'VE HEARD THAT, AFTER GIVING BIRTH TO AI-SAN, SHE FLED WITH A MAN AND ABANDONED HER...

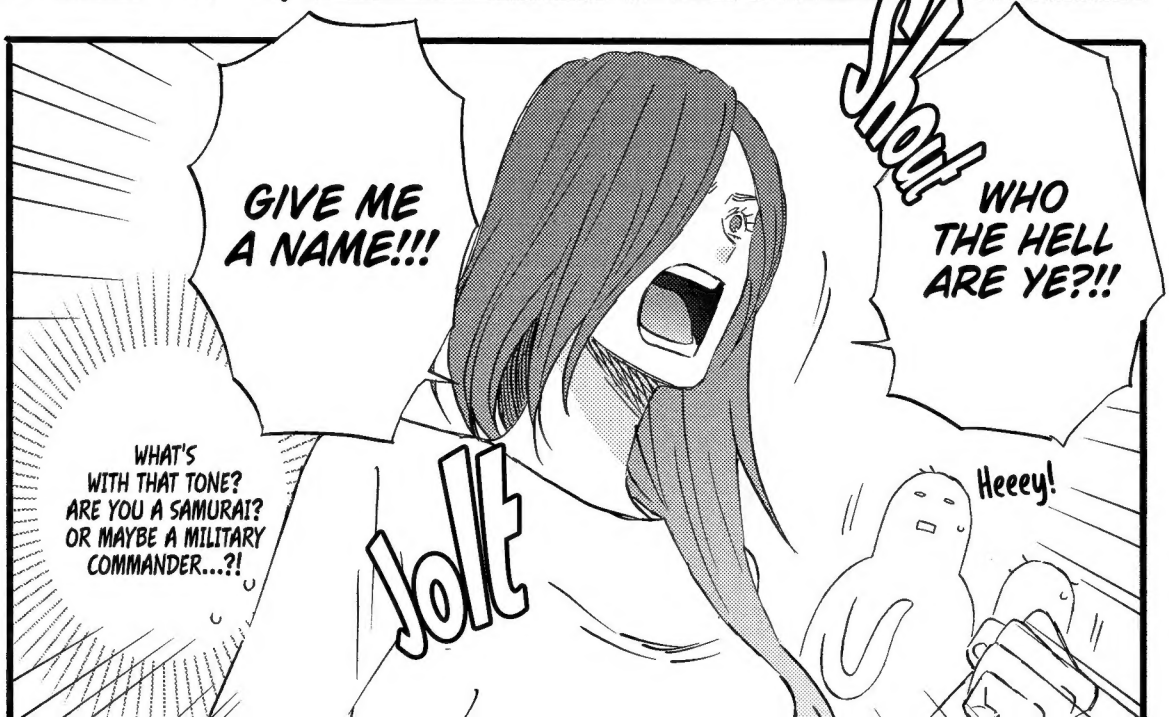
BUT NOW, AI-SAN IS SUDDENLY REUNITING WITH THAT PERSON, WHO HASN'T BEEN HEARD FROM IN OVER 20 YEARS...

AS HER HUSBAND, I MUST APPROACH THIS SITUATION CAREFULLY...

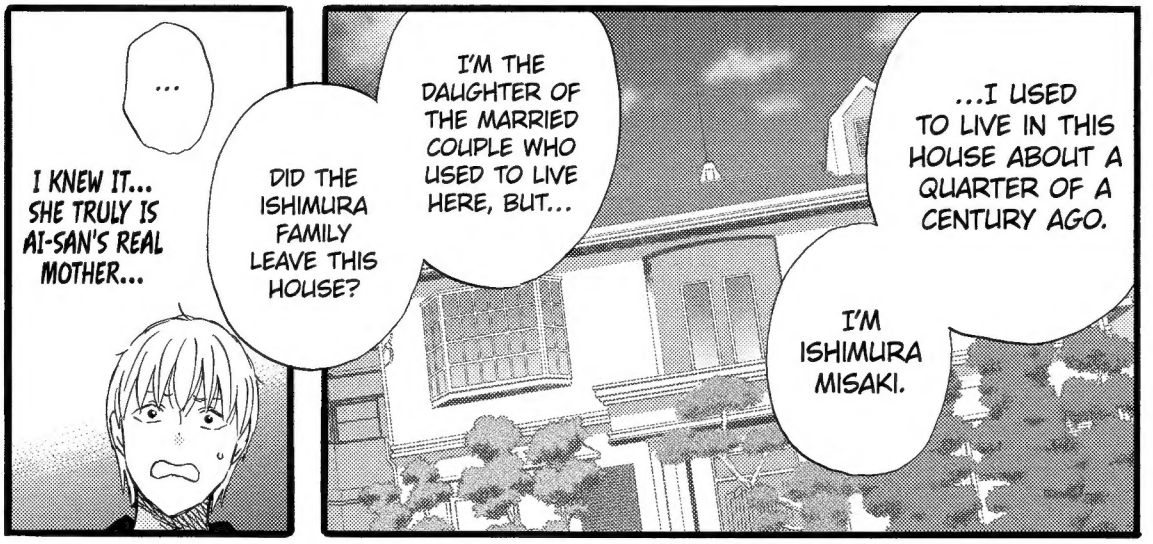

I WONDER WHAT KIND OF EMOTIONS AI-SAN IS EXPERIENCING RIGHT NOW...

ALL RIGHT.

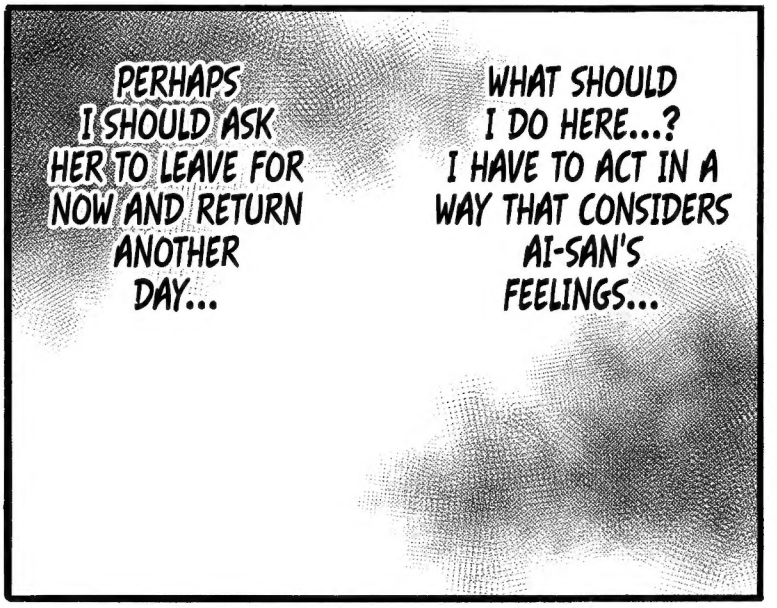

I DON'T FEEL GOOD ABOUT OPENING THE DOOR TO A STRANGER.
ANYWAY, WE DON'T KNOW WHY SHE'S HERE...
INDEED.
SO FIRST WE SHOULD CONFIRM HER IDENTITY.


Shout
WHO THE HELL ARE YE?!!
GIVE ME A NAME!!!
WHAT'S WITH THAT TONE? ARE YOU A SAMURAI? OR MAYBE A MILITARY COMMANDER...?!
Jolt
Heeey!

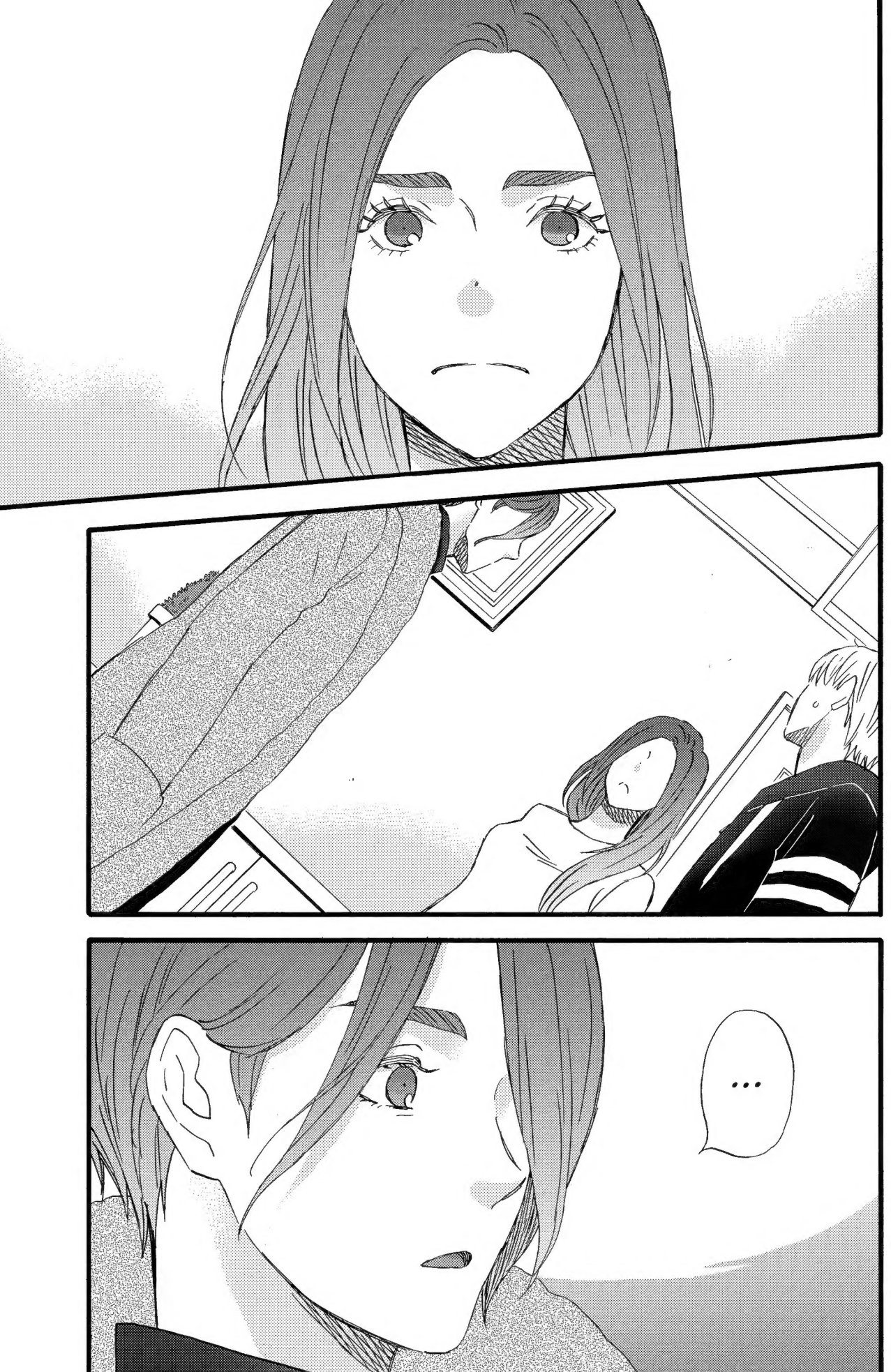
...
HEY, MOTHER. COULDN'T YOU ASK THAT IN A DIFFERENT WAY?
HUH? DID I SAY SOMETHING STRANGE?
FIRST, YE MUST PROVE WHO YE ARE!!
I CANNOT ALLOW A STRANGER TO ENTER INTO THIS DOMICILE!


...
I KNEW IT... SHE TRULY IS AI-SAN'S REAL MOTHER...
DID THE ISHIMURA FAMILY LEAVE THIS HOUSE?
I'M THE DAUGHTER OF THE MARRIED COUPLE WHO USED TO LIVE HERE, BUT...
...I USED TO LIVE IN THIS HOUSE ABOUT A QUARTER OF A CENTURY AGO.
I'M ISHIMURA MISAKI.

Ker-chak
COME ON IN.
YOU DO THINGS WAY TOO FAST, GEEZ!


PERHAPS I SHOULD ASK HER TO LEAVE FOR NOW AND RETURN ANOTHER DAY...
WHAT SHOULD I DO HERE...? I HAVE TO ACT IN A WAY THAT CONSIDERS AI-SAN'S FEELINGS...

HM...?
I WAS ABOUT TO FREEZE...
GOOD GRIEF. YOU'VE FINALLY LET ME IN...
Staaare...
FATHER DIED A FEW YEARS AGO, AND MOTHER IS CURRENTLY HOSPITALIZED.
WHERE'S THE OLD COUPLE WHO USED TO LIVE HERE?
OH? WHO ARE YOU GUYS?
...UM...



MOTHER...
HEY, MOTHER!

COULD IT BE THAT YOU ARE...

FATHER SAID SHE MUST'VE FALLEN IN LOVE WITH SOME STRANGE MAN.

...

...I WONDER ABOUT THAT, TOO.

THE MOTHER WHO GAVE BIRTH TO ME...

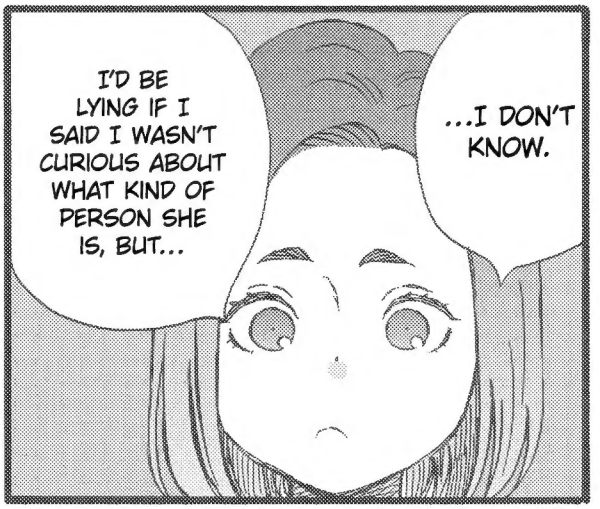
WHERE DID SHE GO AFTER SHE LEFT OUR HOUSE?

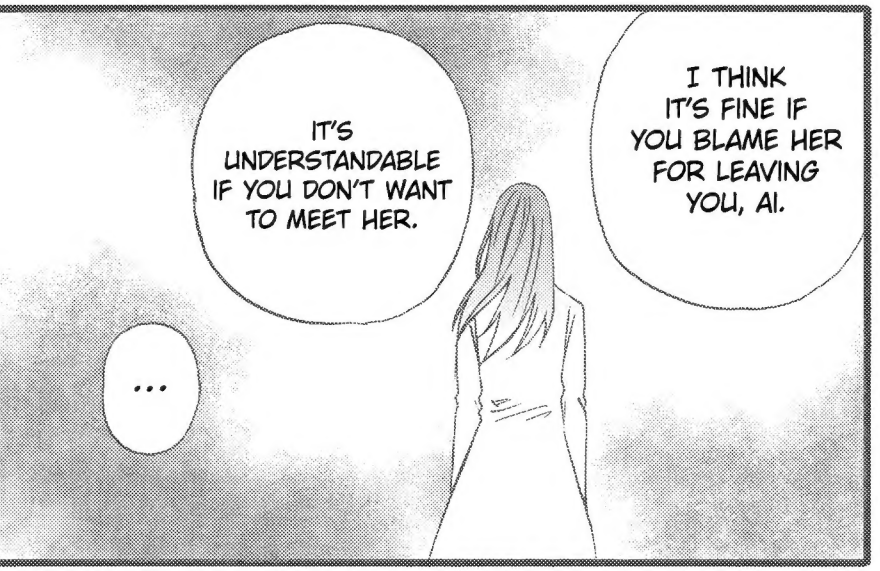
DO YOU WANT TO MEET THE PERSON WHO GAVE BIRTH TO YOU ONE DAY?

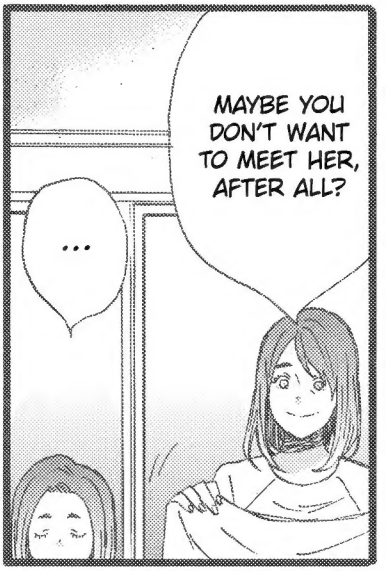
...

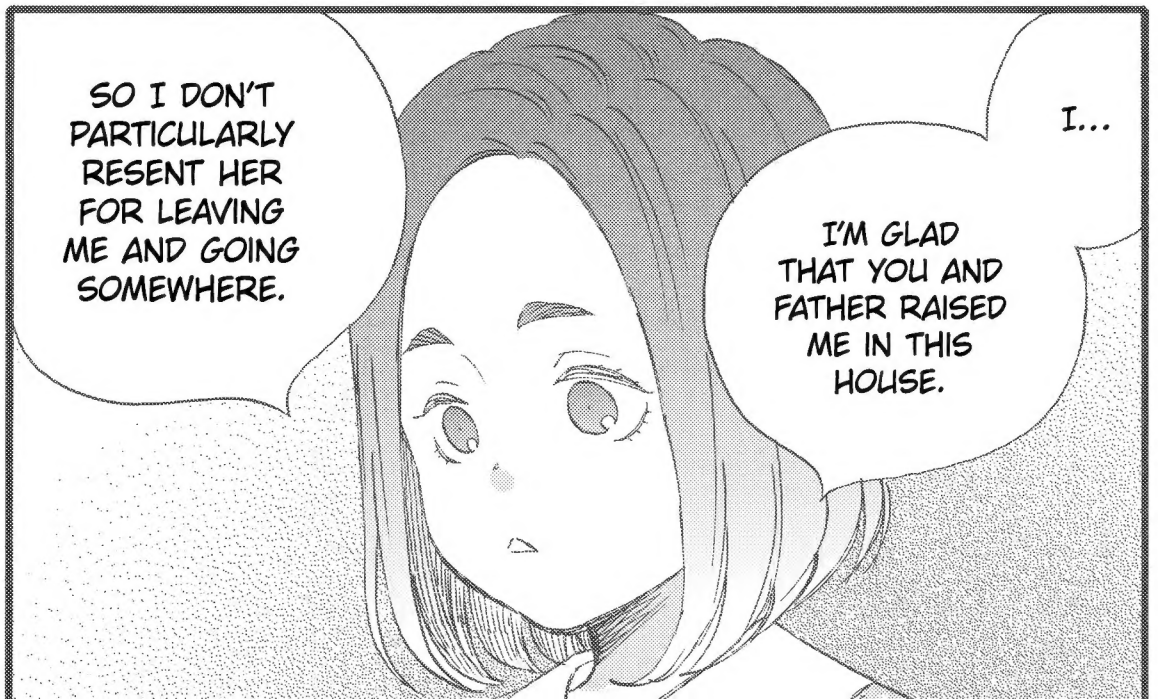
THAT COULD BE THE CASE.

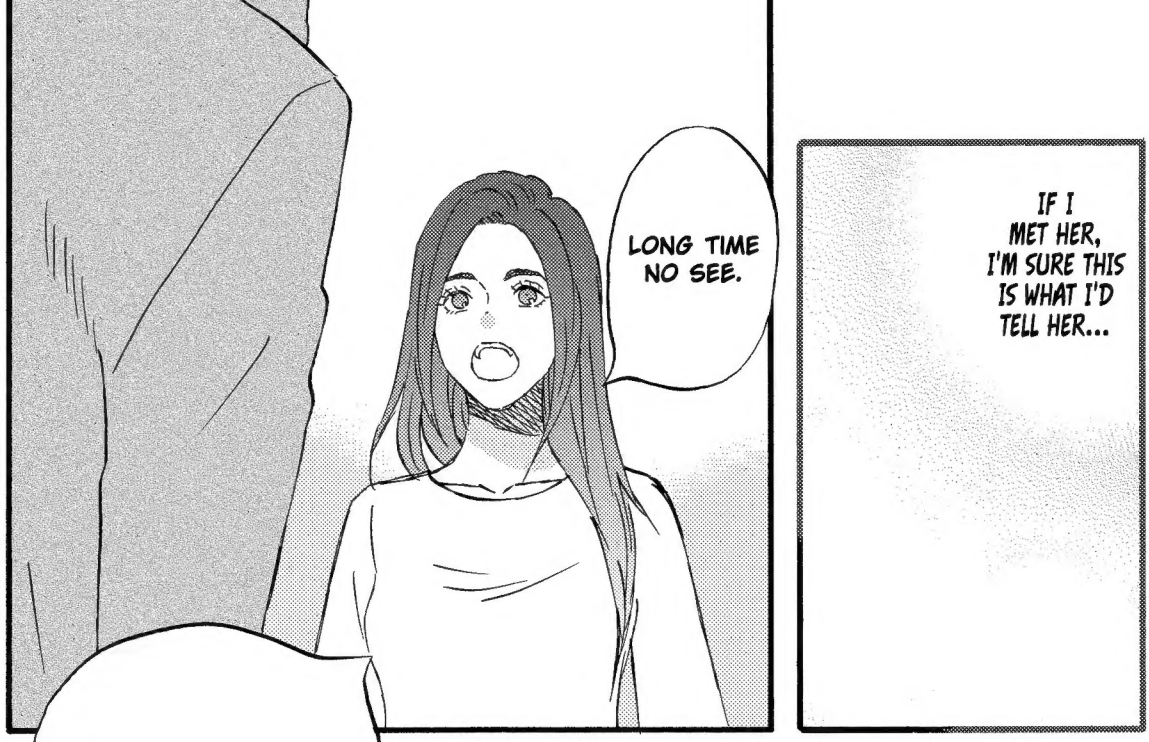
IF YOU COULD MEET, WHAT WOULD YOU TALK ABOUT?
HMM... I'M NOT SURE.

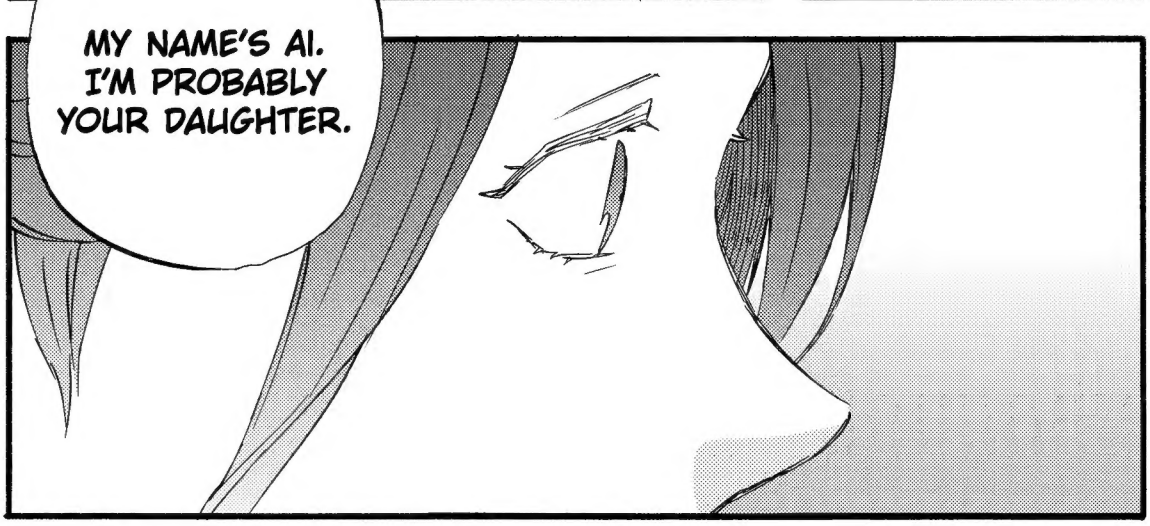

I'D BE LYING IF I SAID I WASN'T CURIOUS ABOUT WHAT KIND OF PERSON SHE IS, BUT...
...I DON'T KNOW.


I THINK IT'S FINE IF YOU BLAME HER FOR LEAVING YOU, AI.
IT'S UNDERSTANDABLE IF YOU DON'T WANT TO MEET HER.
...

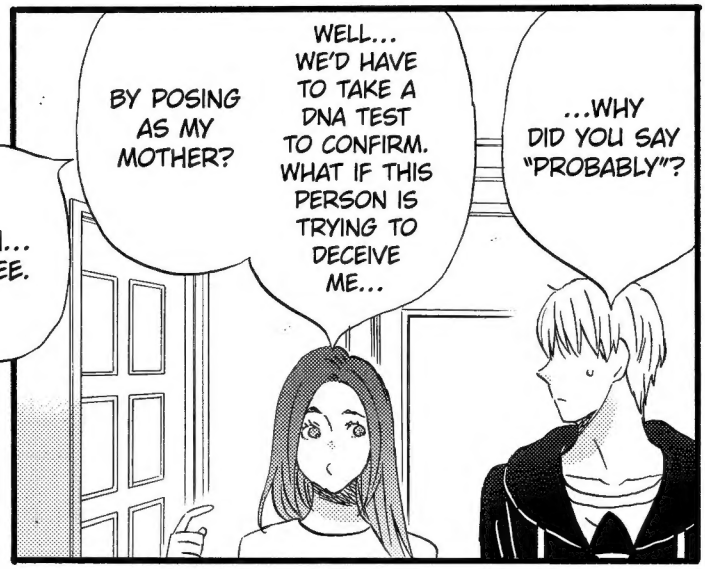

MAYBE YOU DON'T WANT TO MEET HER, AFTER ALL?
...


I...
I'M GLAD THAT YOU AND FATHER RAISED ME IN THIS HOUSE.
SO I DON'T PARTICULARLY RESENT HER FOR LEAVING ME AND GOING SOMEWHERE.

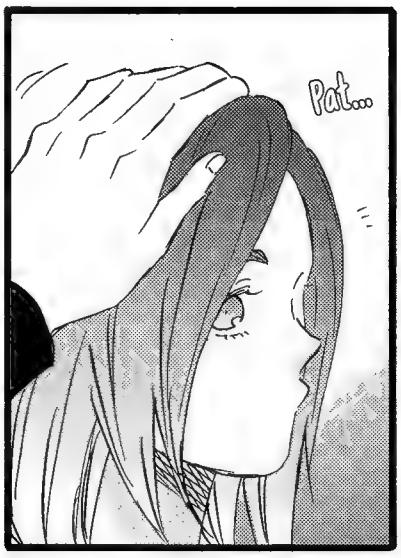

LONG TIME NO SEE.
IF I MET HER, I'M SURE THIS IS WHAT I'D TELL HER...

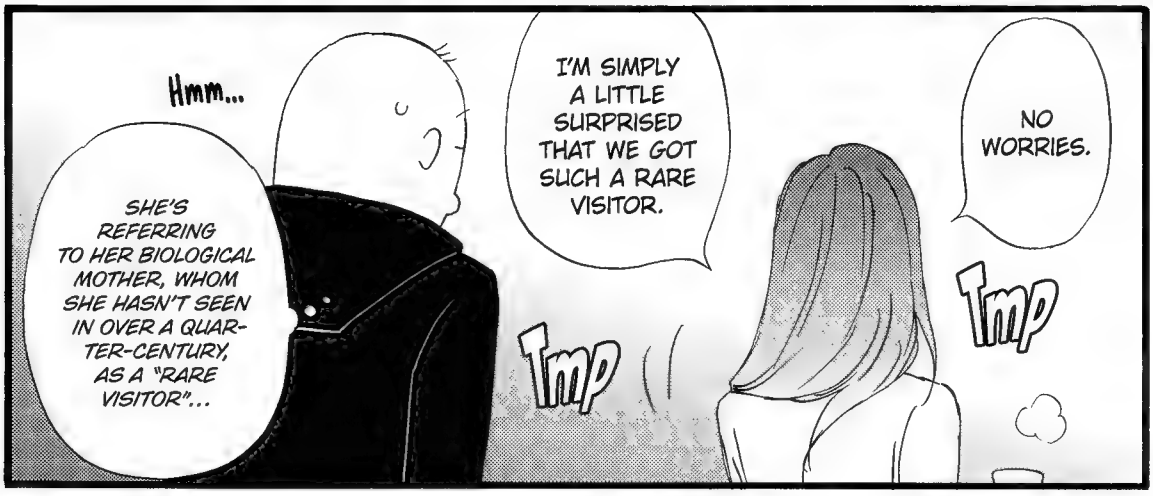

MY NAME'S AI. I'M PROBABLY YOUR DAUGHTER.

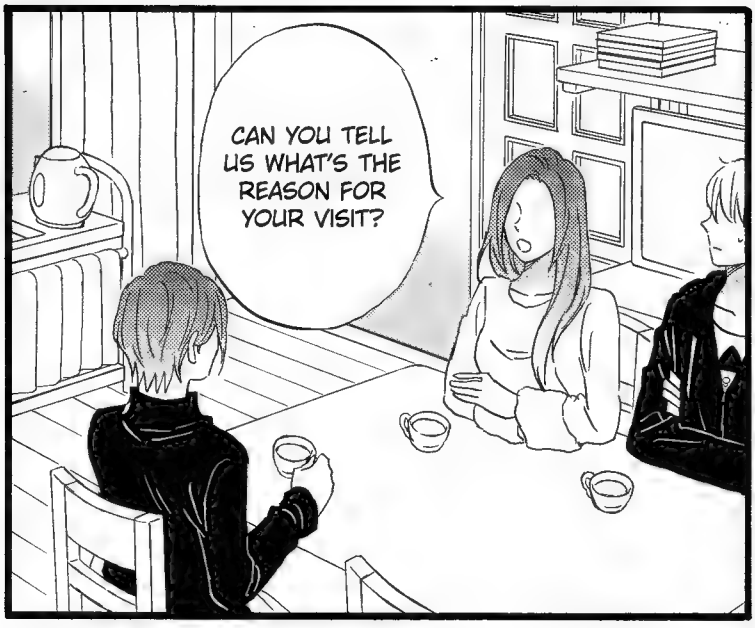
STILL, IS A DNA TEST EVEN NEEDED IN THIS CASE? THEY LOOK SO SIMILAR...
...


OHH... I SEE.
BY POSING AS MY MOTHER?
WELL... WE'D HAVE TO TAKE A DNA TEST TO CONFIRM. WHAT IF THIS PERSON IS TRYING TO DECEIVE ME...
...WHY DID YOU SAY "PROBABLY"?

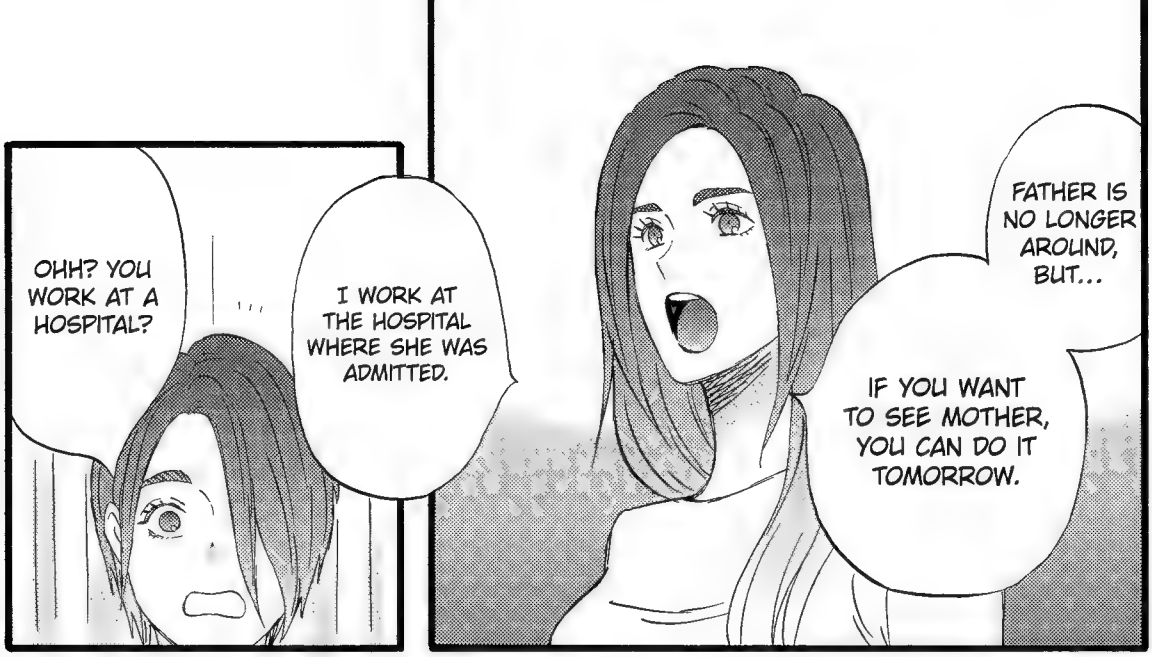
WELL, IT'S JUST... I'M WONDERING IF YOU'RE OKAY.
...
Pat...
Pat...
WHAT'S UP?


Pat...

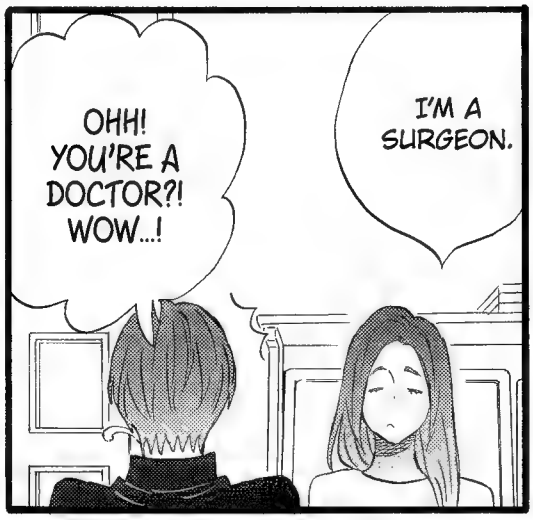

Hmm...
SHE'S REFERRING TO HER BIOLOGICAL MOTHER, WHOM SHE HASN'T SEEN IN OVER A QUARTER-CENTURY, AS A "RARE VISITOR"...
I'M SIMPLY A LITTLE SURPRISED THAT WE GOT SUCH A RARE VISITOR.
Tmp
NO WORRIES.
Tmp

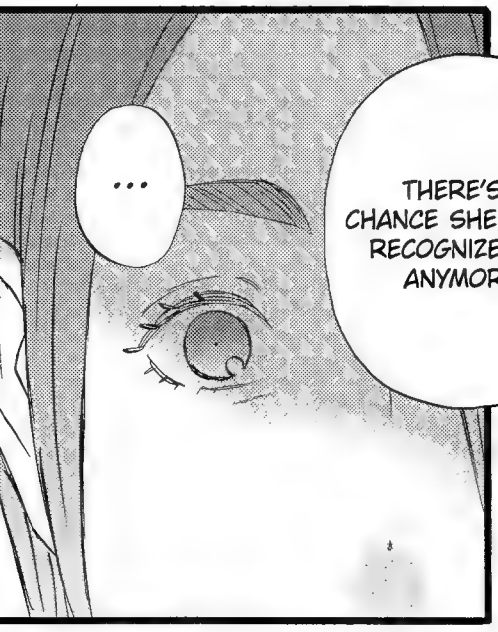

CAN YOU TELL US WHAT'S THE REASON FOR YOUR VISIT?

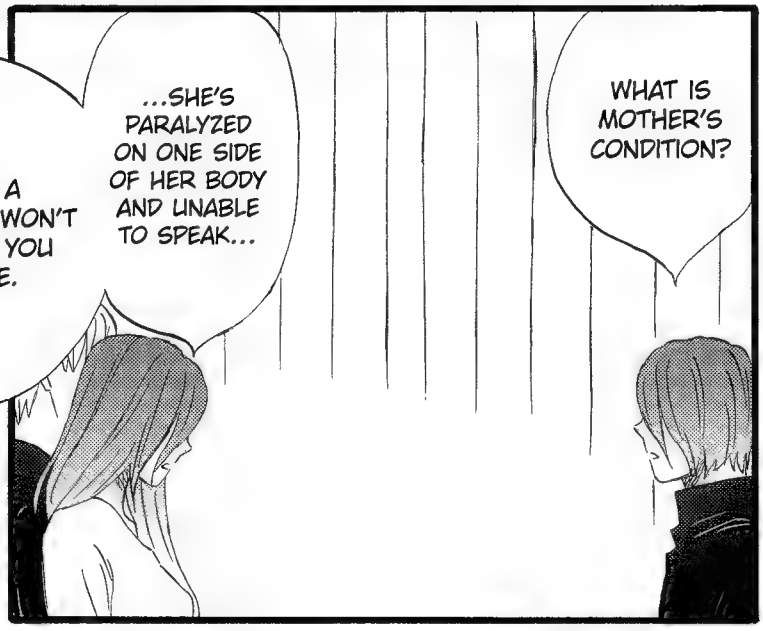
WELL, THEN...


OHH? YOU WORK AT A HOSPITAL?
I WORK AT THE HOSPITAL WHERE SHE WAS ADMITTED.
FATHER IS NO Llonger AROUND, BUT...
IF YOU WANT TO SEE MOTHER, YOU CAN DO IT TOMORROW.

Amazing...
HA HA HA!
YOU'RE QUITE REMARKABLE FOR SOMEONE I GAVE BIRTH TO!
...


OHH! YOU'RE A DOCTOR?! WOW...!
I'M A SURGEON.


...
THERE'S A CHANCE SHE WON'T RECOGNIZE YOU ANYMORE.


...SHE'S PARALYZED ON ONE SIDE OF HER BODY AND UNABLE TO SPEAK...
WHAT IS MOTHER'S CONDITION?

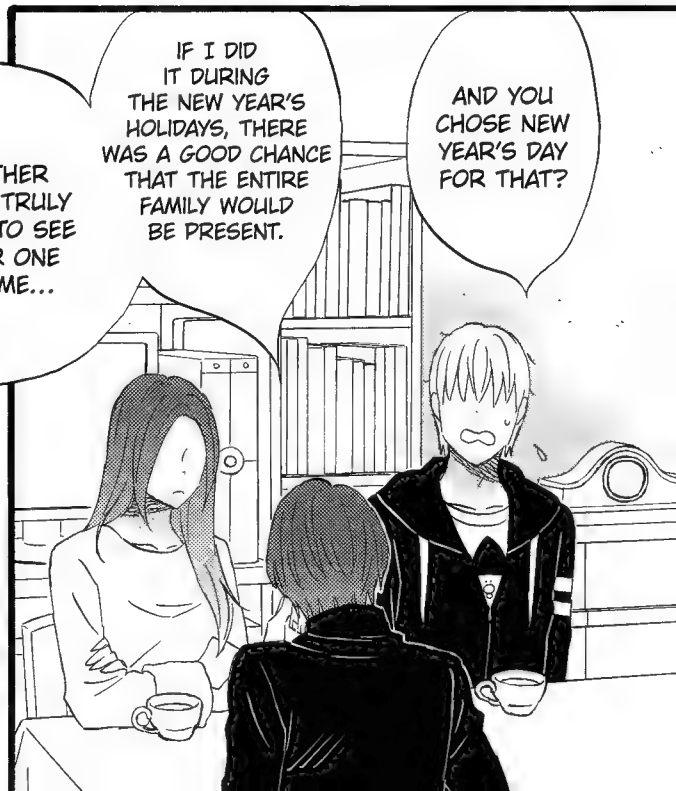
...
I SEE... HER CONDITION IS QUITE SERIOUS, ISN'T IT...?
I SHOULD'VE COME EARLIER.

I'M PLANNING TO LEAVE THIS COUNTRY SOON.
IT'S POSSIBLE THAT I WON'T EVER COME BACK, SO...
I'VE DECIDED THAT I SHOULD AT LEAST SHOW MY FACE HERE ONE LAST TIME.

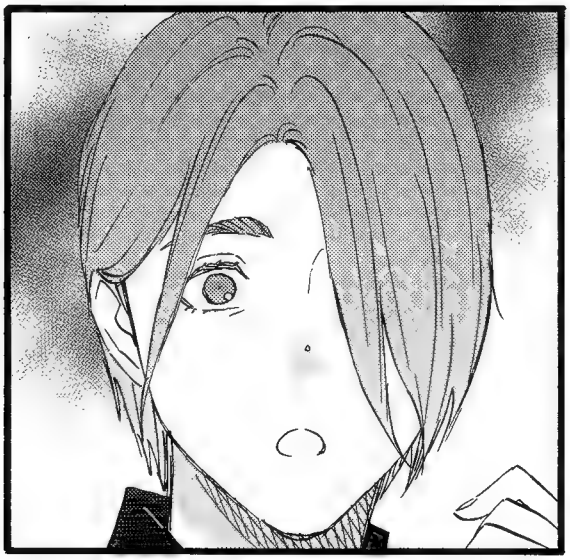
UM... YOU STILL HAVEN'T EXPLAINED WHY YOU CAME HERE...
OHH... YOU'RE RIGHT.

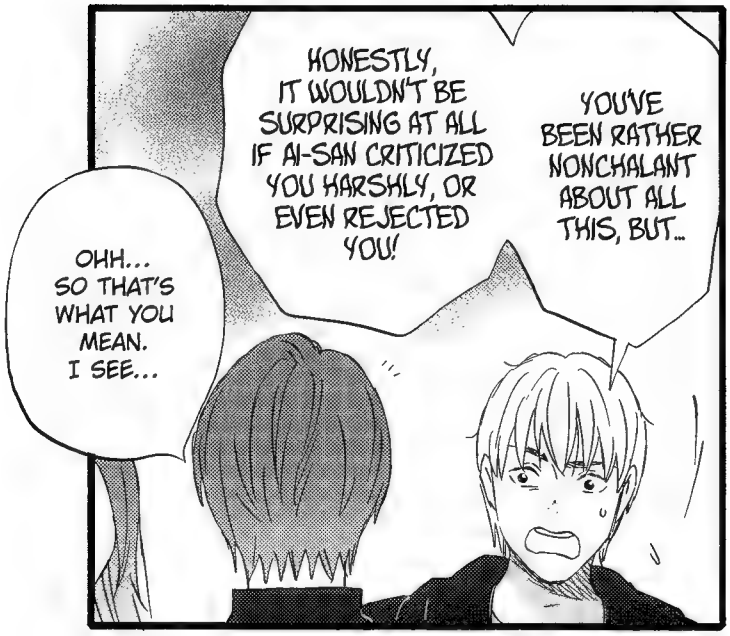
WHAT ABOUT AI-SAN...?

...
MY FATHER ASIDE, I TRULY WANTED TO SEE MOTHER ONE LAST TIME...


IF I DID IT DURING THE NEW YEAR'S HOLIDAYS, THERE WAS A GOOD CHANCE THAT THE ENTIRE FAMILY WOULD BE PRESENT.
AND YOU CHOSE NEW YEAR'S DAY FOR THAT?

...DID YOU THINK AT ALL ABOUT THE DAUGHTER YOU GAVE BIRTH TO?




HONESTLY, IT WOULDN'T BE SURPRISING AT ALL IF AI-SAN CRITICIZED YOU HARSHLY, OR EVEN REJECTED YOU!
YOU'VE BEEN RATHER NONCHALANT ABOUT ALL THIS, BUT...
OHH... SO THAT'S WHAT YOU MEAN. I SEE...

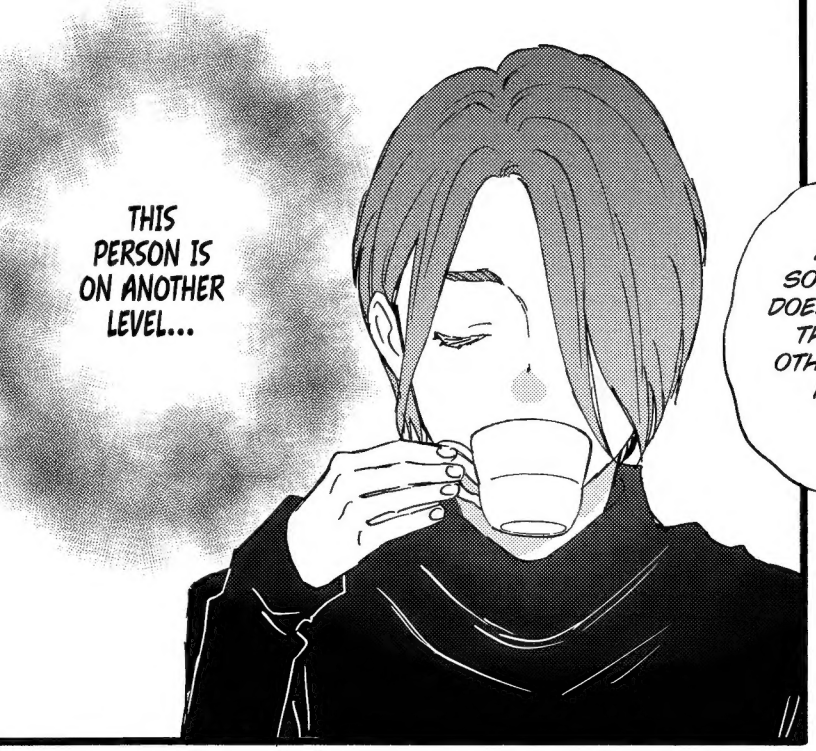
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
DON'T YOU HAVE ANY REGRETS?
DON'T YOU FEEL SORRY...? DON'T YOU FEEL ANYTHING AT ALL?! THAT'S WHAT I'M ASKING...
?

I'M SORRY, BUT I DON'T REGRET IT OR FEEL LIKE I NEED TO APOLOGIZE EVEN ONE BIT.

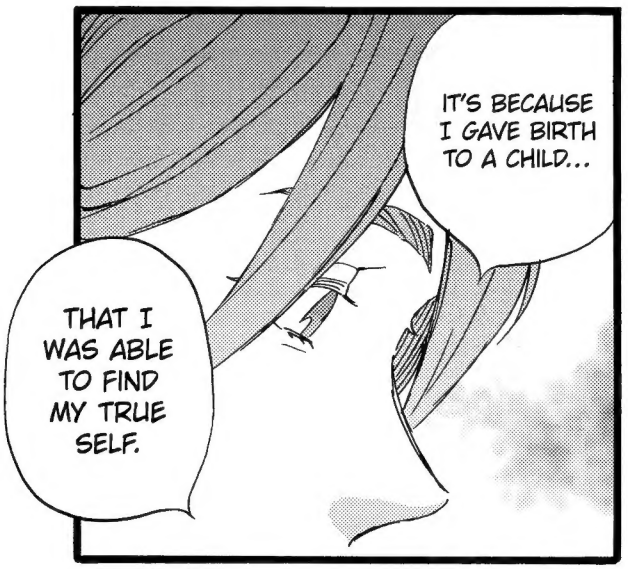
HEH!

YOU MUST BE GLAD THAT I ABANDONED YOU.
AFTER ALL, BEING RAISED BY MY MOTHER...
WAS UNDOUBTEDLY PREFERABLE TO BEING RAISED BY ME.

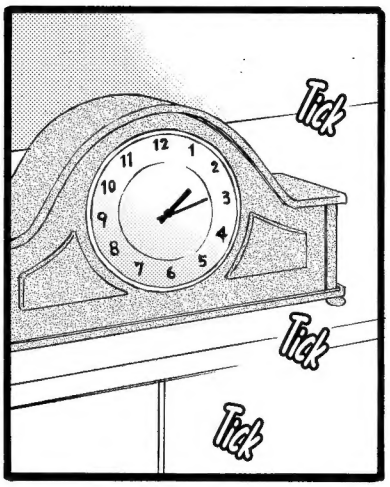
MY MOTHER WAS A GOOD MOTHER, WASN'T SHE?
...

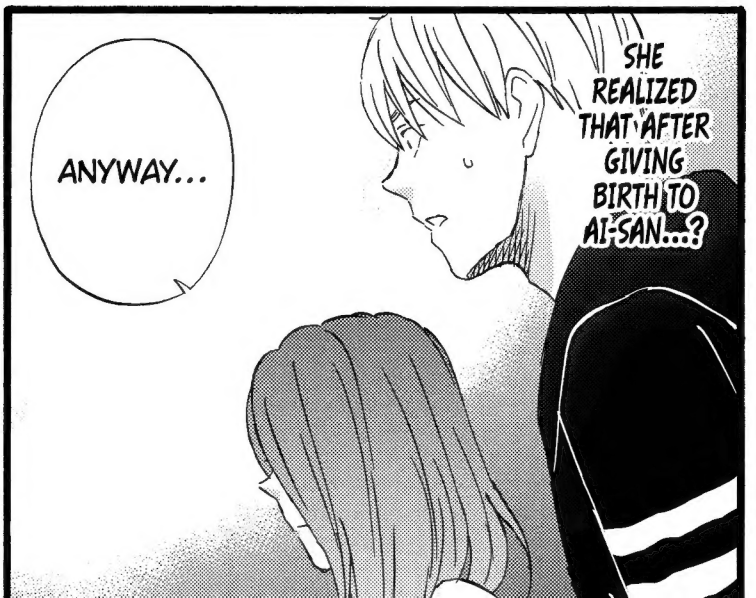

THIS PERSON IS ON ANOTHER LEVEL...

AI-SAN IS SOMEONE WHO DOESN'T USUALLY THINK ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE'S FEELINGS, BUT...
That's so unreasonable...


IT'S BECAUSE I GAVE BIRTH TO A CHILD...
THAT I WAS ABLE TO FIND MY TRUE SELF.

I DON'T HAVE ANY REGRETS OR APOLOGIES TO MAKE, BUT...
THANKFUL ...?
I AM THANKFUL TO YOU.


Tick
Tick
Tick


ANYWAY...
SHE REALIZED THAT AFTER GIVING BIRTH TO AI-SAN...?

I'M SLEEPY.

SAME HERE. I'M ABOUT TO CRASH.

HUH ...?

IS THERE SOMEWHERE I CAN SLEEP?

THERE'S THE STOREROOM IF YOU'RE FINE WITH THAT.

OF COURSE. THANKS A LOT.

OH. SORRY, SHIROU-KUN, BUT CAN YOU CARRY THE FUTON TO THE STOREROOM?

Huh?

Huh?!

Tmp

Tmp

Tmp

LET'S CONTINUE OUR TALK TOMORROW, OKAY?

Clatter

SURE.

Clatter

WHAAAT?!

GOOD NIGHT...

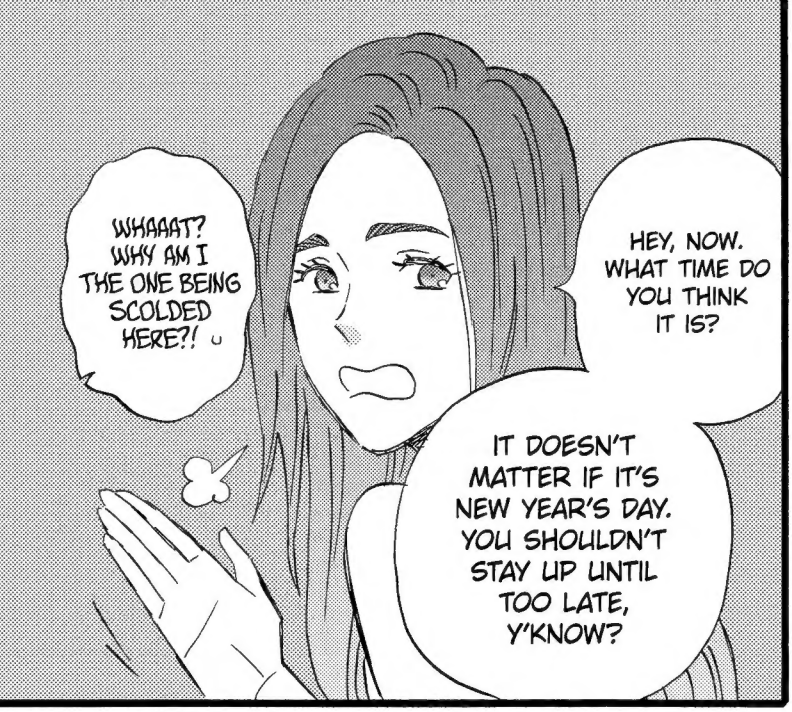
OH... HAVE A GOOD NIGHT...

...WAIT. WHAT THE HECK?!

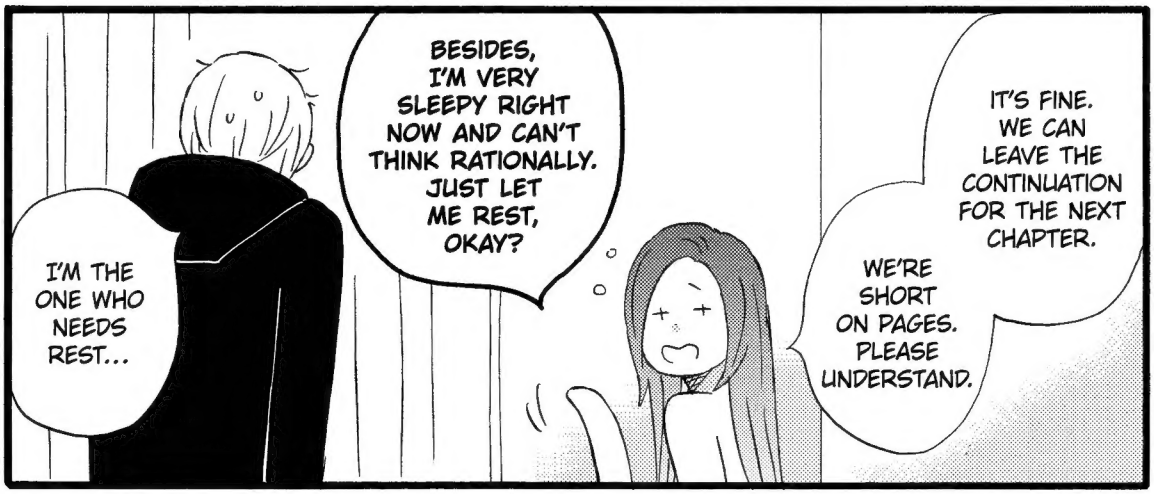
...

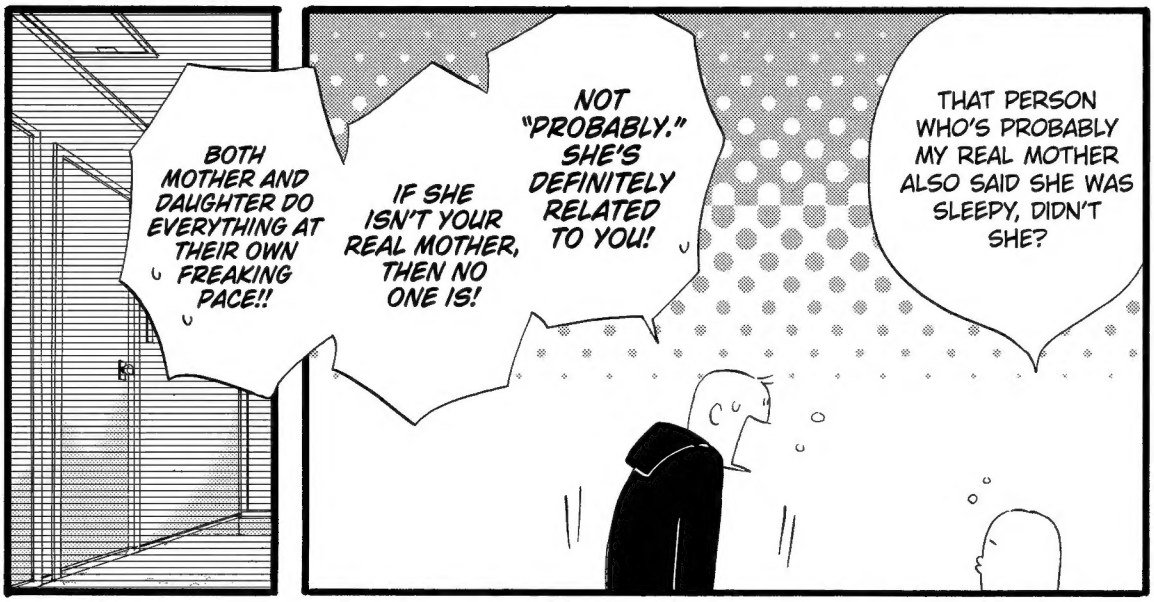
Oh!

THANKS.


WHAAAT? WHY AM I THE ONE BEING SCOLDED HERE?!
HEY, NOW. WHAT TIME DO YOU THINK IT IS?
IT DOESN'T MATTER IF IT'S NEW YEAR'S DAY. YOU SHOULDN'T STAY UP UNTIL TOO LATE, Y'KNOW?

NO, NO! LIKE I SAID, WHAT THE HECK?!
GOOD NIGHT...
What about your conversation?!
Snuggle...


I'M THE ONE WHO NEEDS REST...
BESIDES, I'M VERY SLEEPY RIGHT NOW AND CAN'T THINK RATIONALLY. JUST LET ME REST, OKAY?
WE'RE SHORT ON PAGES. PLEASE UNDERSTAND.
IT'S FINE. WE CAN LEAVE THE CONTINUATION FOR THE NEXT CHAPTER.


BOTH MOTHER AND DAUGHTER DO EVERYTHING AT THEIR OWN FREAKING PACE!!
IF SHE ISN'T YOUR REAL MOTHER, THEN NO ONE IS!
NOT "PROBABLY." SHE'S DEFINITELY RELATED TO YOU!
THAT PERSON WHO'S PROBABLY MY REAL MOTHER ALSO SAID SHE WAS SLEEPY, DIDN'T SHE?

IT WAS A LOT QUIETER IN THE PAST...
MISAKI-CHAN. HEY, MISAKI-CHAN!
...
...
WHAT A NOISY HOUSE...
YOUR FATHER WILL SCOLD YOU AGAIN.
YOU REALLY ARE A TOMBOY!
LOOK AT YOUR CLOTHES. THEY'RE SO DIRTY....
HE'LL SAY, "BEHAVE MORE LIKE A GIRL!"
...